AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

COMPLETE LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-19 : (Canceled)

Claim 20 : (Currently Amended) A communication system, comprising: ~~an SDH~~ a synchronous digital hierarchy (SDH) network, an Ethernet network, the ~~DSH~~ SDH network having an SDH network management system to monitor functionality of network elements in the SDH network, the SDH network being arranged to transport at least Ethernet information in SDH format across the SDH network, the SDH network being at least partially situated at a host site, the Ethernet network being situated at a user site, the SDH network comprising an SDH network element arranged to convert the Ethernet information in the SDH format into Ethernet format information for transportation between the host and user sites via a link between the host and user sites, the Ethernet network comprising an Ethernet network element to receive the Ethernet format information, and a user network termination element connected by a direct connection to the SDH network element, the user network termination element being arranged to convert information from optical Ethernet format to electrical Ethernet format and from the electrical Ethernet format to the optical Ethernet format, the SDH network element being operative to request a status of the Ethernet network element when the SDH network element is required to update the SDH network management system with status information on the functionality of at least one of the SDH network element and the Ethernet network element, the direct connection between the SDH

network element and the user network termination element being used for determining if the user network termination element is functioning correctly.

Claim 21 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 20, wherein the SDH network element comprises network termination equipment.

Claim 22 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 21, wherein the network termination equipment comprises an SDH multiplexer and an associated Ethernet conversion card.

Claim 23 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 20, wherein the SDH network element is arranged to request the status of the Ethernet network element by transmitting the request for status within the format of an Ethernet frame transported over the link.

Claim 24 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 20, wherein the SDH network element is arranged to request the status of the Ethernet network element by transmitting the request for status between successive Ethernet frames transported over the link.

Claim 25 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 23, wherein the Ethernet network element is arranged to provide a response to the request for status from the SDH network element by transmitting the response within the format of an Ethernet frame transported over the link.

Claim 26 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 24, wherein the Ethernet network element is arranged to provide a response to the

request for status from the SDH network element by transmitting the response between successive Ethernet frames transported over the link.

Claim 27 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 23, wherein the Ethernet network element is arranged to provide status information to the SDH network element by transmitting the status information within the format of an Ethernet frame transported over the link.

Claim 28 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 24, wherein the Ethernet network element is arranged to provide status information to the SDH network element by transmitting the status information between successive Ethernet frames transported over the link.

Claim 29 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 23, wherein the SDH network element is arranged to issue an instruction to the Ethernet network element by transmitting the instruction within the format of an Ethernet frame transported over the link.

Claim 30 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 24, wherein the SDH network element is arranged to issue an instruction to the Ethernet network element by transmitting the instruction between successive Ethernet frames transported over the link.

Claim 31 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 20, wherein the link is a point-to-point optical link.

Claim 32 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 20, wherein the Ethernet network element comprises an opto-electrical converter.

Claim 33 : (Previously Presented) The communication system, as claimed in claim 20, wherein the SDH network element is further arranged to convert Ethernet format information received from the Ethernet network into SDH format information for transportation across the SDH network.

Claim 34 : (Currently Amended) A method of communication between ~~an SDH~~ a synchronous digital hierarchy (SDH) network and an Ethernet network, the method comprising the steps of: monitoring functionality of network elements in the SDH network using an SDH network management system, arranging the SDH network to transport at least Ethernet information in SDH format across the SDH network, situating the SDH network at least partially at a host site, situating the Ethernet network at a user site, arranging an SDH network element of the SDH network to convert the SDH format Ethernet information into Ethernet format information, transporting the Ethernet format information between the host and user sites via a link between the host and user sites, receiving the Ethernet format information with an Ethernet network element at the Ethernet network, and connecting a user network termination element by a direct connection to the SDH network element, the user network termination element converting information from optical Ethernet format to electrical Ethernet format and from the electrical Ethernet format to the optical Ethernet format, the SDH network element being operative to request a status of the Ethernet network element when the SDH network element is required to update the SDH network management system with status information on the functionality of at least one of the SDH network element and the Ethernet network element, and using the direct connection between the SDH network element and the user network termination element for determining if the user network termination element is functioning correctly.

Claim 35 : (Currently Amended) A communication system, comprising: a first network, a second network, the first network having a network management system to monitor functionality of network elements in the first network, the first network being arranged to transport at least some information intended for the second network across the first network in a format compatible with the first network, the first network being at least partially situated at a host site, the second network being situated at a user site, the first network comprising a network element arranged to convert the format of the information intended for the second network into second network format information compatible with the second network for transportation between the host and user sites via a link between the host and user sites, the second network comprising a network element to receive the second network format information, and a user network termination element connected by a direct connection to the network elementof the first network, the user network termination element being arranged to convert information from an optical to an electrical format of the second network and from the electrical to the optical format of the second network, the network element of the first network being operative to request the status of the network element of the second network when the network element of the first network is required to update the network management system of first network with status information on the functionality of at least one of the network element of the first network and the network element of the second network, the direct connection between the network element of the first network and the user network termination element being used for determining if the user network termination element is functioning correctly.

Claim 36 : (Currently Amended) A method of communicating between a first network and a second network, the method comprising the steps of: monitoring

functionality of network elements in the first network using a network management system, arranging the first network to transport at least some information intended for the second network across the first network in a format compatible with the first network, situating the first network at least partially at a host site, situating the second network at a user site, arranging a network element of the first network to convert the format of the information intended for the second network into second network format information compatible with the second network, transporting the second network format information between the host and user sites via a link between the host and user sites, receivign the second network format information at the second network with a network element of the second network, and connecting a user network termination element by a direct connection to the network element of the first network, the user network termination element converting information from an optical to an electrical format of the second network and from the electrical to the optical format of the second network, the network element of the first network being operative to request a status of the network element of the second network when the network element of the first network is required to update the network management system of the first network with status information on the functionality of at least one of the network element of the first network and the network element of the second network, and using the direct connection between the network element of the first network and the user network termination element for determining if the user network termination element is functioning correctly.